Nature Park Project at Vishakhapatnam

3851. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

{a) whether Union Government have accorded clearance and funding of Nature Park Project at Vishakhapatnam city in Kambalakoda Forest area blocks in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details of funds released, so far, for the purpose; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and by when the funds are expected to be released?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) Since Nature Park is not a legally recognised entity, which can be funded by the Central Government, the State Government has been requested to notify the area as a Wildlife Sanctuary. The Central Government would be in a position to provide assistance for development of the Sanctuary in a phased manner, once it has been notified as a sanctuary.

Warming of the Globe

3852. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the earth is getting warmer at a regular pace, causing serious environmental and climatic changes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the main reasons for such warming up of the global surface; and

(d) what steps are likely to be taken, on a war-footing, to control this heating up?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) According to Third Assessment Report of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)— a body

jointly established by United Nations Environment Programme and World Meteorological Organization, the global-average surface temperature has increased since 1861. Over the 20th century the increase has been 0.6 ± 0.2 degree centigrade. Most of the warming occurred during two periods, 1910 to 1945 and 1976 to 2000. The increase in concentrations of greenhouse gases of anthropogenic origin in the atmosphere is attributed to the rise in temperature. The existing legal and policy framework in India adequately addresses the concerns of global warming.

Decline in forest cover

3853. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise forest cover in 2000, as compared to 1960;

(b) whether the forest coverage is on the decline; and

(c) if so, the details of steps taken to increase forest cover in various States, especially in Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Forest Survey of India is assessing forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 using satellite data. The results of first six assessments show marginal decline in forest cover from 19.49% to 19.27%. In the latest seventh assessment of the period from 1995 to 1998, the forest cover of the country has shown a marginal increase to 19.39%. State-wise details of forest cover as per the seventh assessment is given in the statement. *(See* below).

(c) Various important steps taken by the Government including State of Madhya Pradesh for increasing forest cover are:

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State-UT Governments from their own resources as well as with financial • assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all StatcAJT Governments to